

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 5, 2023

Mr. Robert Manfred  
Commissioner  
Major League Baseball  
1271 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

I write regarding the future of the Oakland Athletics Baseball Club in the East Bay. Many of my constituents in the East Bay and I are increasingly frustrated with the continuing apparent failure of the team and Major League Baseball to deal in good faith with local government agencies.

The City of Oakland and Alameda County have been home to the A's for five and half decades. Multiple generations of Oaklanders have grown up identifying with the team's dogged efforts and hard-earned triumphs. The A's organization adds significant tangible economic benefit to our region, including numerous good paying jobs at Oakland Coliseum. But as important is the sense of unique shared cultural identity that surrounds the team and its local fanbase.

I believe strongly that our community also provides value to the A's. Oakland has been the scene for this franchise's greatest successes. East Bay performing artists have celebrated the A's musically, and the A's team colors and style feature prominently in local fashion, providing the franchise with significant value and cultural caché. Not least, the fans and employees of the A's and Oakland Coliseum have made their own significant contributions to the team's bottom line for fifty-five years.

The City of Oakland and Alameda County have worked to assemble a compelling plan for a new ballpark and surroundings—items which the A's had previously publicly said were indispensable for a new home field. And yet recent press reports suggest the team and Major League Baseball are pursuing an alternative that includes none of these assets.

These reports lead me and many in the East Bay to conclude that the A's and MLB have in fact not been acting in good faith. As a federal legislator, I believe such actions are inconsistent with federal policy goals related to the MLB's exemption from antitrust scrutiny.

In a July 2022 letter to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, you volunteered that, "The antitrust exemption helps ensure that MLB Clubs maintain deep and enduring relationships with their fan bases, whereas franchises in other major professional sports regularly relocate from one market to another." That same month, in an interview published in the Los Angeles Times, you are quoted as saying "The principal utility of the exemption is that it allows us to be more aggressive than other leagues in preventing franchise relocation. It is a fan-friendly doctrine in the law." Yet in this case, Major League Baseball is actively seeking to subsidize the relocation

of the Oakland A's through your public offer to waive MLB's standard relocation fee and actively take crucial revenue, and a cultural staple, from the East Bay.

MLB's continued active encouragement of the A's abandonment of Oakland and the East Bay runs counter the rationale supporting MLB's century-old exemption from federal anti-trust law. I ask you to reconsider efforts to subsidize or otherwise encourage the relocation of the Oakland A's out of the East Bay. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" and the last name "Lee" clearly distinguishable.

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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress